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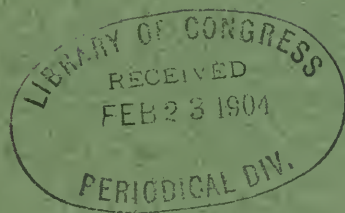
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A History of

Somerville Journalism

Somerville Historical Society ✓

Publication No. 1



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MRS. BARBARA GALPIN.

HISTORY

.. . . OF

SOMERVILLE JOURNALISM

.. . . BY

MRS. BARBARA GALPIN



WITH A LIST OF

Members, Officers, and Committees

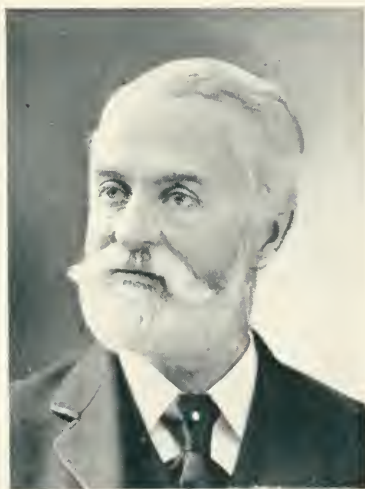
OF THE

SOMERVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JUNE, 1901

P.
Publ.

19F '04



JOHN F. AYER.

Somerville, Mass., June 15, 1901.

"Mrs. Barbara Galpin :—

"My dear Madam,—The Somerville Historical Society is about to begin the publication of some of the valuable papers read before its members from time to time, together with other matters of interest to the society and the public. Allow me to ask whether you will furnish a copy of the one you read before the society last winter, entitled 'A History of Somerville Journalism?'

"Recognizing, as we must, the power of the press, and its great influence and importance in the ever busy world of to-day, appreciating the high standard of excellence always maintained by its present representatives in Somerville, I deem your historical paper worthy of preservation, and earnestly suggest that you permit the society to print the same as above indicated.

"Awaiting your favorable reply, I remain,

"Yours truly,

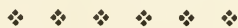
"John F. Ayer,

"President Somerville Historical Society."

A History of Somerville Journalism.

The first regular publication in Somerville of which I can find any copy or information was "The Gem," a monthly paper of four pages, published by Alfred L. Elliot on Webster avenue, Somerville. The first number was issued January 1, 1861, and was an illustrated one, having the cut of an American eagle in the heading and a picture of General Washington on the second page. The editorial in this tiny paper is worth reading to you, to show how high an ambition the boy editor had, and what he expected to do with forty-eight inches of space. The editor said: "In presenting to the public the first number of 'The Gem,' I hope it will be considered as such. I intend to devote a portion of it to history, another portion to biography, a part of its columns to poetry, anecdotes, enigmas, etc. Each number will contain a record of the events of the past month. Thus I will endeavor to make it interesting to all. My only solicitude is that it will not be remunerative, but I shall publish it as long as I have one subscriber." The terms of payment were strictly in advance: Two cents for a single copy, six cents for six months, or ten copies for that time for fifty cents.

The first number contained an article on the gunpowder plot, a sketch of the life of Washington, "to be continued," a poem on the New Year, signed "Z. E.," and probably the young editor's mother, enigmas, bits of advice, short paragraphs, and witty sayings. The present sixty-page Sunday paper might learn a valuable lesson from "The Gem" in condensing matter.



About this time Edwin M. Bacon, now editor of the "Time and the Hour," and a writer of several historical works, and

Charles B. Hollander published a little paper called "Every Once in a While." In the prospectus sent out "to the world in general and their friends in particular," the editors said:—

"The undesigned herewith announce their intention of publishing a newspaper bearing the above title, the first number of which—if the fates prove not averse—will be issued by next New Year's day, or as soon after that as the state of the funds in their exchequer will permit; the publication to be continued from that time as a monthly.

"To warrant them in this enterprise, they will require 'material aid' from the public, and this prospectus is now issued by them as a subscription list, to which, they trust, their friends will see the necessity, and have the magnanimity to affix their names, as below.

"One thing which we wish to impress upon the reader's mind is this: That the work is to be done entirely by ourselves, and this fact may prevent our fulfilling engagements with the strictest promptitude, and is also partly the reason of our adopting the above somewhat ambiguous heading.

"Our terms will be one dollar per year, subscriptions taken for six months at a proportionate rate; payable on the publication of the first number.

"We remain, very respectfully, the public's most obedient and humble servants,

"E. M. Bacon,

"C. B. Hollander."

The paper of this date, January 1, 1861, contained a story by Mrs. N. T. Munroe, a poem by Mrs. E. A. Bacon, a sketch on "True Politeness," by P. H. Raymond, besides editorial notes and comments, and a review of the "Events of the Past Fall." I think only two editions of this paper were issued.



In the fall of 1870 Pythian block, Union square, was finished, and nearly all sorts of business interests were represented within

its walls. One room remained vacant, and Ira Hill, the owner, had rented part of his real estate office to Charles D. Elliot, the first president of this association.

"What can I get into that vacant room that will pay?" said Mr. Hill to Mr. Elliot one day.

"Get a newspaper; Somerville needs one," said Mr. Elliot.

"All right, I will."

Within a short time W. A. Greenough & Co., the directory publishers, started a paper which has been one of the leading factors in the upbuilding of the city—the Somerville Journal. The first number was issued December 3, 1870, a seven-column, four-page paper, containing much miscellaneous matter and a small amount of local news.

There are followers of every good plan, so the Charlestown Chronicle concluded to place another paper in the Somerville homes, and on December 31, 1870, the first number of the Somerville Gazette was published, it really being the Charlestown paper with two columns of Somerville news on the first page. Evidently this paper did not receive the patronage expected, for it lived but a short time, ending its brief existence April 15, 1871.

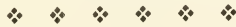


The next paper of which I can find any trace is the Somerville Chronicle, started April 4, 1874. The editors of this venture were A. B. Morss and H. W. Pitman. In their greeting to the public, the editors express their opinion that "there is a demand in this growing municipality for a journal of the class we intend to represent; we shall make an honest and determined effort to supply the citizens of Somerville with a local organ which shall be a vehicle of such news as will specially interest them." Its columns were to be devoted "to the upbuilding of Somerville, independent of all parties, and subservient to no clique." The first paper contained city hall matters, the report of a young man of nineteen dying in a liquor saloon on Milk street, from excessive drinking, a recommendation that part of Bow street, from Union

square to Summer street, be called Summer street, a directory of city officials, secret societies, and the post-office, quite an amount of advertising matter and miscellaneous articles. This paper was discontinued after a few months.



The next newspaper venture in Somerville was the Somerville Citizen, senior, which made its first appearance October 7, 1876, a four-page affair, like all its predecessors, and published by Thomas Scott & Co., Union square. This was Mr. Scott's second appearance in Somerville newspaper work, he having been one of the early publishers of the Journal. This paper announced that it intended to do the "greatest good to the greatest number; with a kind heart and a clear conscience to work for the many, not for the few." In this first issue was a column by Schnapps, in which many things were touched upon which seemed to be neither dignified nor kindly, a department which left a slur on some one,—irrespective of sex. This paper went to join the majority of other papers which had been started in Somerville, and the next one to enter the field was the Somerville Advertiser, beginning its existence about January 1, 1878. This was published at 422 Somerville avenue by Haskell brothers, and was another four-page sheet, filled with quite a large amount of local matter, a lively people's column, and miscellaneous matter. It was published for about three years.



The Firemen's Standard was started as a monthly in September, 1879, by James M. Gould, and was devoted to the interests of firemen in New England. In 1885 it became a semi-monthly, and was published in Hill building, being printed by the Somerville Journal Company. In 1894 it was removed to the new Journal building. In the fall of 1899 Mr. Gould removed to Boston, believing that the New England patrons would be better accommodated in Boston than in a suburban town.

The Golden Cross Journal, a monthly paper, was first issued in June, 1880, by Dr. Edward Hartshorn, in the interest of the Golden Cross, a national benefit insurance organization. It was printed by the Somerville Journal Company for fifteen years, attaining a circulation of 11,000 copies. For the convenience of its patrons, the publication was transferred to Boston in 1895, and it has continued its prosperous career since under the able management of Dr. Hartshorn, and is circulated in every state in the union.



A more pretentious affair was the next newspaper, the Somerville Transcript, it being an eight-page publication. It started in June, 1882, and the price was five cents a copy. The first edition had among its forty-eight columns of matter half a column of local items, and about a column of editorial comments. The rest of the space was filled with plate matter and a strange array of advertisements. This seems to be about the first Somerville publication that introduced the poetical advertisement, and this was probably due to the editor, George Russell Jackson, who became known nearly the world over as a song-writer, a poet, and a wonderful composer of witty paragraphs. He it was who began the Penciling column of the Somerville Journal and conducted it for many years. Mr. Jackson was a keen, bright Scotchman, thoroughly educated, well informed, and with great natural ability. His songs are heard in many homes to-day, and his witty sayings are still traveling around the country, although he has been "sleeping under the leaves," as he termed death, for more than a year. This paper did not supply a "long-felt want," and after three numbers it, also, became a thing of the past.



The first number of the Somerville High School Radiator was issued December 22, 1882, from the office of the Somerville Journal. In its first season of seven months it was conducted exclusively by William E. Brigham, editor, Miss Annie Coffin,

associate editor, and Wilton L. Farnham, business manager. It was an eight-page sheet, unillustrated. Throughout the first era of its existence it was almost wholly an original production, even to its joke column. It became a twelve-page paper with the graduation issue of 1883, and a sixteen-page one on June 24, 1884. Mr. Brigham was also the editor of the paper in its second season, but C. Fred Smith, now one of the leading business men of Lynn, became financial manager, and a staff of assistant editors was added, consisting of Misses Annie Coffin, Addie M. Brown, Alice M. Buswell, and Annie B. Stevens, and Charles L. Young, J. Fred Galletly, and Frank O. Watson.

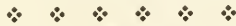
The Radiator and its projectors took the lead in the amateur journalism of the state, which was then at its height, supported local athletics, made a gallant, but unsuccessful, fight for the introduction of military drill in the high school, and succeeded in securing the adoption by the boys of uniform school caps, of the naval pattern, a few of which have been seen occasionally of late years. After three issues in the fall of 1884, the Radiator fell by the wayside, not to rise again until the fall of 1895, when it resumed publication, which has since been continued.

The first editor of the resuscitated Radiator was Herman T. VanDusen, and the first business manager Lyman C. Hurd, Jr. Several of its staff have graduated to professional journalism, and many of its early supporters and contributors have honored their school and its courageous little champion in professional and other positions of importance and trust.



Following along in line came the Somerville Sentinel, which started in the fall of 1885, and was first published by the Mc-Donnell brothers in Union square. It was an eight-page publication, catering to the Democratic element of the city. After about six years' existence, it changed its heading and general style and continued its struggle for a little time longer, then sought the happy hunting grounds of so many Somerville literary ventures.

The next paper in Somerville was not only a failure, but a disgrace to its name and to the city. It was called "The Somerville Truth," but there was very little of that quality used in its composition. In its so-called work of reform it attacked the innocent, misrepresented the earnest workers for good, maligned city officials, and should have been excluded from every home in the city. It began its reckless career about January 1, 1883, in Masonic building, Union square, with D. E. W. Stone as publisher. Later on, in 1884, the late H. C. Gray, of Malden, associated himself with Mr. Stone in the publication of Truth; it was enlarged to an eight-page paper, and was published in Eberle building. Nearly as much space was devoted to Charlestown and Cambridge news as to Somerville interests, and although the tone of the paper was improved under Mr. Gray's direction, it never received the respect of the Somerville people, and when its unhealthy life ended, no one regretted it.



E. Gerry Brown, of Charlestown, now the famous Socialist agitator of Brockton, was the next man to give to the people of Somerville a paper which should fill a "long-felt want," and for a second time the Somerville Chronicle appeared in the hands of the newsboys. Like its predecessors, it tried to cover the world of art, literature, and local happenings, and, like all its predecessors with but one exception, the Journal, it went out of life unmourned and unsung in May, 1885.



In 1887 the first and only newspaper ever published by a woman in Somerville made its appearance. This was "The Home Life," edited and published by Mrs. M. D. Frazar, one of Somerville's brightest and brainiest women. As its name indicated, it was devoted to the interests of the home, was pure in tone, helpful in spirit, and exceptionally interesting. Although published in Hill building, Somerville, it circulated largely in the

West, and attained a circulation of 20,000 copies, the largest circulation of any paper ever published in Somerville. Owing to Mrs. Frazar's removal to Mexico, the paper was stopped, but during its existence it was a credit to the woman who published it and to the city from whence it went.



The first number of *The Writer* was issued by Robert Luce and William H. Hills in April, 1887. Mr. Hills bought Mr. Luce's interest in *The Writer* in September, 1888, and began the publication of *The Author*, a companion magazine to *The Writer*, in January, 1889. In January, 1892, *The Author* was merged in *The Writer*, which is still published.



The *Somerville Citizen* was established August 17, 1888, and was the second one of the same name. The movement to establish this paper originated with John Herbert, Esq., and Wilbur S. Clarke, who had the co-operation of President E. H. Capen, of Tufts College, J. Warren Bailey, Richard E. Nickerson, Frank E. Hodgkins, and William Taylor in the promotion of the enterprise. These gentlemen composed the first board of directors, with E. H. Capen as president and John Herbert as treasurer. The other stockholders were M. W. Carr, F. M. Kilmer, C. C. Davis, S. C. Darling, William Franklin Hall, W. H. Hodgkins, Joseph H. White, David Cummings, M. P. Elliott, F. E. Fitts, L. P. Hollander, W. M. Armstrong, F. H. Hardison, A. H. Carvill, R. D. Pratt, E. A. Stone, R. C. Downer, and J. H. Brooks. The company was formally organized and incorporated as the "Citizen Publishing Company," October 15, 1888. Changes have occurred since, the company now publishing the paper having been incorporated March 20, 1899, under the name of "The Citizen Company," with the following officers: President, John Herbert; vice-president, J. Warren Bailey; clerk and treasurer, E. L. Pease; who, with F. E. Dickerman, compose the board of directors.

The editor of the Citizen says that it was the aim of the promoters to furnish a paper which should advocate good government, assist by its influence in the election of the best qualified men to public office, and to creditably represent and conserve local interests. The editorial department has been successively under the charge of Rev. J. F. Bartlett, F. H. Hardison, Edgar R. Perry, Fred A. Draper, W. E. Brigham, and E. L. Pease, the present incumbent. The same gentlemen have also acted as business managers of the paper.

The office of the Citizen at first was in the Stickney building, corner of Pearl and Marshall streets, but in 1891 it was moved into larger quarters in Gilman square, where it is now located. A well-equipped job plant is an auxiliary to the mechanical department, the company having always printed the paper. Although published at Winter hill, the Citizen has not been sectional in its aim or scope.



In the winter of 1893, January 6, the Somerville News made its appearance. This was a seven-column, four-page paper for six weeks, then a four-column, small, twelve-page paper, but after a few weeks it returned to its original size. H. W. P. Colson was the first proprietor; in less than a year it passed into the hands of F. A. Draper. Later on several newspaper men tried to steer it to success, but to no avail. It went the same way as many of its predecessors, and was not seriously missed.



The latest aspirant for public favor in the Somerville newspaper world is the West Somerville Reporter, a small, four-page affair, which was issued for the first time on December 15, 1899. C. F. Blanchard is the proprietor, and the price is only fifty cents a year.



SOMERVILLE JOURNAL BUILDING.

Somerville Journal



You will pardon me if I go back to the beginning and tell you something more of the history of the Somerville Journal. The first number was issued December 3, 1870, and was a four-page sheet, with seven columns to a page, and this first number contained ten columns of advertisements and eighteen columns of reading matter. In six months' time this proportion had changed to sixteen columns of advertisements and twelve columns of reading matter—a sure indication of success. In the first number appeared a notice about the opening of St. Thomas' church, to be occupied the following Sunday, and also the foundation of St. Joseph's church was mentioned. A church directory was printed, which included eleven churches.

In the issue of December 24, 1870, appeared an article on Somerville's need of a town hall, and in that paper the first original poem by G. B. Hunnewell was printed, as well as the collector's notice of sixty-four estates to be sold for non-payment of taxes. A report of S. Z. Bowman appearing before a committee of the Massachusetts legislature February 6, on the bill for keeping libraries open on Sundays, was in the issue of February 11, 1871, and two weeks later I find a lengthy article on "Parks—Shall we have one?" and recommending for the purpose the area from Central street to Cedar street.

In March of that year a two-column poem by Frank M. Hawes, read at the high school reunion, was published in the

Journal, as well as a class ode by Miss Louise A. Vinal. In the paper of March 4, 1871, a valedictory by W. A. Greenough, Jr., was given: at that time the Journal passed into the hands of J. A. Cummings & Co., the firm consisting of J. A. Cummings, G. W. Cummings, and Russell H. Conwell. In this paper the news items were greatly increased in number, and an editorial note is as follows:—

“The Journal of last week had a bona fide sale of eleven hundred more copies than ever. It is so much better than we expected that we think of hiring Horace Greeley to write for us on annexation and sewerage.” Later in that month it is recorded that annexation is a “gone coon,” “now for a city charter,” and the proposed charter was printed March 18, 1871.

On the first of April, 1871, the Journal removed to No. 10 Union square. In that month a little attention was paid to women by the printing of a column of New York fashions; evidently it was not appreciated, for the column was not continued.

In the Journal of April 29, 1871, was given a list of the legal voters in Somerville October 28, 1843. The first editorial in a Somerville paper about a woman was in the Journal of this date, and was about Miss Irene Locke, a teacher, who began her work when the town came into being, and, on account of ill health, she was obliged to resign. In the fall of 1871, September 26, four names are mentioned as candidates for the first mayor of the new city,—C. H. Guild, J. R. Poor, Mr. Thayer, and George O. Brastow, the editorial urging the election of Mr. Brastow. In the issue of December 9 I find that twenty-five men are mentioned for mayor, three of whom afterward filled the position, but the Journal’s candidate, George O. Brastow, was the successful one.

The publication of the exercises of graduation at the schools was begun in July, 1871, and on August 12 a sketch of Somerville history was given. Another valedictory was published December 30, 1871, by the editor, Rev. R. H. Conwell, and J. A. Cummings, who had been the business manager, now assumed the editorial duties.

From the first the People's column was a prominent feature of the paper, and church, society, and musical matters received a fair share of attention. Deaths and marriages were put in occasionally, but the wedding and obituary notices were few and far apart.

The first enlargement of the Journal was the issue of April 20, 1872, when a supplement was made necessary for the publication of the city ordinances. In May of that year the Journal was working earnestly for the temperance cause, and regretting that the vote for prohibition was lost by a vote of 256 against 162, Ward Three being the only ward voting for prohibition. About this time items under the heading of "Personals," in small type and few in number, appeared, as if a little ashamed of their boldness.

September 23, 1871, was published a list of tax-payers whose tax was \$500 or more; there were forty-nine residents and nineteen non-residents in the list. The first wedding ceremony to be reported in the Journal was in the same paper, and was that of General and Mrs. Douglas Frazar, and it was a report which has never been equaled for variety, style, and detail in the Journal since.

After a successful management of the Journal, Major Cummings sold it to Thomas Scott. Under his management, assisted by Charles St. John, it was successful financially, but it supported measures which would not be advocated by the present manager.

In May, 1875, the Journal became an eight-page paper, and had an illustrated story by Edward A. Kelley. Bourne Spooner was the editor and proprietor at this time, having bought it in May, 1874, and its tone was much better than under the previous management. Newspaper errors crept into the columns of the paper then as now, and in a marriage notice of September 25, 1875, by a curious mistake, I find it reported that a well-known East Somerville man was married to two women at the same time and by the same minister.

In 1875 four physicians advertised in the Journal who are still in practice in Somerville—A. H. Carvill, E. L. White, H. C. White, and J. F. Couch. Two Somerville men have advertised in the Journal continuously since the paper started—S. H. Libby and J. Q. Twombly. In November, 1875, a series of articles on Somerville industries was started, but only one, that about the Union glass company, was published at that time.

On October 21, 1876, the editor, Bourne Spooner, made the announcement that he had severed his connection with the paper, and J. O. Hayden, the present manager, took it. In Mr. Hayden's salutatory he said that he should make no new departures from the policy of his predecessor, as he had no hobby to ride and no axe to grind beyond a sincere desire to publish a paper which should be a credit to the city and a paying investment to the proprietor. Edward A. Kelley, a former editor, was associated with Mr. Hayden as managing editor. Immediately a different tone was given to the paper. Where it had been supporting license, it now made a vigorous protest against liquor selling in Somerville, and the absence of liquor shops in our city to-day is largely due to the Journal. In the issue of December 2, 1876, we find a change, the paper then being published by J. O. Hayden & Co., and it continued in that way until May, 1890, when a stock company was formed, with the late O. S. Knapp as president, and J. O. Hayden as manager and treasurer.

In December, 1876, the Journal advocated the forming of a national bank, and continued to advocate it until it was established. The forming of public parks has always been urged by the Journal, and on December 23, 1876, a plan of the public park on Central hill was published. Later on, in speaking of a park system, attention is called to the fact that while \$1,000,000 is estimated as the cost for the scheme, \$10,000,000 will be needed to perfect it.

Among the subjects editorially treated and supported by the Journal at this time were vacation schools, and a board of health organized under the act of the legislature which would give full

powers to the board. Previous to this the board of health had been composed of the mayor and board of aldermen. The Journal strongly advocated taking advantage of this act to establish such a board.

In April, 1877, the present form of the local page was adopted, which has been copied by nearly every publication started in Somerville.

The one feature which has made the Somerville Journal known in every state in the union, and from which quotations are everywhere made, is the Penciling column. This has had but three writers since its adoption, I think, and was started, as I said previously, by the versatile George Russell Jackson; C. H. Hoyt, the play-writer, had charge of it for a year, and W. H. Hills has conducted the column for the past fifteen years.

The first fully illustrated article in a Somerville paper was in the Journal. It was unique, to say the least; and described minutely the Ghost story of Cambridge, the haunted house of 1878. Another feature of the Journal which was widely read was the police reports of 1878. Mr. Jackson wrote them, half in poetry, half in prose, and each one was a literary gem, despite the subject. In June of that year a children's department was started, and Mrs. A. E. Pickens, formerly of Winter hill, was a frequent contributor.

The Journal, in an editorial in January, 1879, on "Rapid Transit," said, in regard to a petition which had been presented to the legislature asking for the authority to build an elevated railway through Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, and Chelsea, that, while it did not look as if the project would go through at this time, there could be no doubt but that a road would be built, and that to Somerville such a road would be a matter of great importance. Later, in May, 1879, an editorial gave the information that the elevated railway enterprise was evidently not destined to die, "even when so powerful a body as the legislature sits down upon it."

In September, 1881, the valuable and scholarly articles on

Egypt, entitled "Recollections of the Past," by Judge Isaac Story, were begun, and continued for a year, attracting much attention from learned men all over the country. Later in the same year the Journal editorially advocated and urged the importance of keeping the streets lighted during the entire night, not only for the convenience of residents, but also as a protection against crime. It also advocated the idea of making the no-license vote hold over for more than one year.

The first picture of a Somerville person to be printed in a Somerville paper was that of Hon. John A. Cummings on his election as mayor, January 7, 1882. To show how this branch of the business has developed, I will say that in the Journal of January 5, 1900, forty double and single column half-tone cuts were used. In July, 1882, several things were added to the Journal's outfit, two of which aroused much interest—the telephone and a patent machine for folding, pasting, and cutting the paper.

In the Journal of April 18, 1885, is this notice: "After many years, our city, with its 33,000 inhabitants, has its first bank, the Somerville savings bank."

A review of the census statistics from 1850 to 1885 was given September 19, 1885, and although it may not be keeping strictly to my subject, I would like to quote it:—

POPULATION.

	Popu- lation.	Gain per cent.
1850	3,540	
1855	5,806	66
1860	8,025	40
1865	9,353	16
1870	14,685	58
1875	21,868	50
1880	24,933	14
1885	29,992	20

In the issue of September 26, 1885, I find an editorial urging that a section of the new library be set apart for Somerville historical matter, which would be of value to future historians, and

a week later was published a long story of the dedication of the library. A very interesting article on Boston history was published in September, 1886. In the fall of that year, 1886, the subject of electric lighting was agitated, and on Christmas eve of that year the lights were used for the first time.

In 1888 wood cuts, mostly double-column ones, were used, and the pictures of the late Charles E. Gilman, George I. Vincent, city clerk, Clarence E. Meleney, superintendent of schools, Rev. George Skene, Hon. C. G. Pope, and other well-known men were brought out. Some of them were good, and some of them were rather crude.

A West Somerville department was begun in the Journal of March 3, 1888, and a branch office was opened in Davis square. This department is now one of the leading features of the paper. In the issue of August 11, 1888, there was an interesting editorial, "A Look Backward," giving valuable historical data regarding Somerville.

There has been much discussion over the original Mary and her little lamb. In the Journal of September 1, 1888, appears an illustrated article which should forever set at rest the question, and in the issue of October 12, 1889, is a sketch, "Random Recollections," by C. S. O'Neil, which would be of interest to this society.

Since the close of 1889 no advertisements have appeared on the first page of the Journal, despite the many offers of special prices, the manager believing that the appearance of the paper is improved thereby, and is much more acceptable to the readers.

In the Journal of January 25, 1890, is the report of an historical lecture by Quincy A. Vinal, given before the Unitarian Club, entitled "Fifty Years Ago." This is an exceedingly interesting article, especially valuable to the historical society. Letters of travel have been a prominent feature in the Journal, some of them beautifully illustrated. These began in the early part of 1890, and many prominent people have contributed to them.

A history of the Somerville churches was published in 1890,

as well as "Somerville Sketches," by C. D. Elliot. A series of articles on the schools, with pictures of the principals, was also given in the same year.

The Somerville hospital was first brought to the attention of the public by an article in the Journal of May 24, 1890, showing the need of one, and asking for support for it. Near the end of 1890, November 29, I find an article on Somerville's war history, which is of interest to all patriotic people.

It has become a custom now to print biographical sketches and pictures of the incoming mayor and aldermen; this custom was instituted January 1, 1891, and although the pictures then were small, and but wood cuts, it denoted a great amount of enterprise, in a newspaper way, to collect and publish them.

A few dates regarding special historic articles may be of value to this society. In the Journal of March 7, 1891, appears an article on "Somerville Forty Years Ago," and May 16 a series of historical sketches by the late John S. Hayes was begun.

The first half-tone cuts used in a Somerville paper were in the Journal in 1891, representing the establishment of Sprague & Hathaway.

The fiftieth anniversary of Somerville will not soon be forgotten. This was first brought to the attention of the public in the columns of the Journal March 14, 1891, and was continually urged and supported until the fete day came, in June, 1892. The Journal of June 18, 1892, was a souvenir edition, and was a sixteen-page, handsomely-illustrated number; twenty half-tone cuts of views of the procession, squares, decorations, speakers, etc., were given, and special editions were printed every hour during the day. This paper was really a work of art, and received commendation from all the newspaper world. A fine souvenir book, containing historical articles, sketches of prominent citizens, stories of the anniversary, all fully illustrated, was issued—15,000 copies being disposed of.

The Journal of March 5, 1892, was a decidedly strange looking one. On the first page it had a reproduction of the town rec-

ords of the town meeting of March 4, 1842, quaint, as you can well imagine, the first half-tone cut of an individual, and also a new Somerville Journal heading. This latter did not please the people; letters were received in every mail asking that the familiar old heading be restored, and after two weeks' trial of the plainer and later style heading, the old one resumed its place, there to remain as long as the Journal is published.

A new department was added to the Journal in March, 1893, the Woman's Page, containing news of women's clubs and societies, helpful things in the household, bits of advice to mothers, and general matters of interest to women. It was intended that this page should be helpful to all, supporting the best things, doing what it could to aid the cause of women in the home, and in public matters. It has been under my management since its beginning, although valuable contributions have been given by many Somerville women. Different series of articles have been published on this page, many of them illustrated, the most recent one being "Our Ministers' Wives."

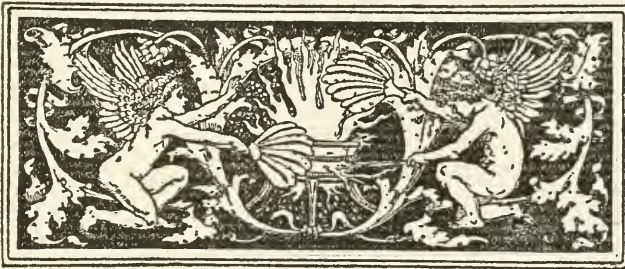
In July, 1894, the Journal moved from Hill building into a brick building at No. 8 Walnut street, which the company built for its own occupancy, with everything in the best possible shape for effective and thorough work, and in the summer of 1896 two Mergenthaler type-setting machines were added to the plant. These machines are the only ones in Somerville, and the work accomplished with them is marvelous.

An historical article on Somerville from 1870 to 1894 (illustrated) was published November 24, 1894, and in May, 1895, a series of articles giving a complete list of the soldiers who went from Somerville was printed. Later on, in November, 1895, an illustrated article on the Journal's quarter century, with a history of the paper, was given, and many of the news items of that date were reproduced. Another interesting historical sketch was that of J. Q. Twombly, printed in the Journal of March 5, 1897. "Looking Backward—Somerville Twenty-five Years Ago," published July 2, 1897, and an exhaustive story on Prospect hill in

relation to the park, in the Journal of January 28, 1898, are both valuable and interesting.



In writing a history of journalism in Somerville I find that most of the material is under the rafters of some one's attic, and it is much easier to obtain a history of Somerville people and Somerville institutions from the papers than to get a history of the papers from the people. I have given you many dates which are not especially interesting, but they may prove valuable to some one in future writing historical sketches. Somerville papers have reason to be proud of their supporters and loyal friends. Somerville, as a city, should be proud of her clean, progressive, helpful local papers.



Somerville Historical Society.

Incorporated November 9, 1898.

Headquarters, the old Tufts House, 78 Sycamore street, famous as having been the headquarters of General Charles Lee, 1775.

Stated meetings are held on the first Monday in October, December, February, and April, the last being the annual meeting.

Beginning with June 5, 1901, the headquarters of the Historical Society will be open to the members and friends, also to strangers, on Wednesdays between the hours of 3 and 5 p. m. It is desirable that all members and friends having interesting relics loan them to the society for these afternoons, thus adding somewhat to the attractiveness of the rooms. A representative of the Library Committee will be in attendance each week, who will receipt for same.

There is also an effort being made to increase the library—donations of books suited to the needs of an historical society are respectfully solicited. It has been suggested, and the idea is a good one, that each member give one volume, and so greatly improve the collection. Should duplicates be brought in, the librarian could readily exchange such books for others desired, if the donors would so agree.

The outings have been inaugurated, and, judging from the hearty approval received by the president and the committee, will prove a very interesting feature of the season. Among others, the following societies will be visited on the dates indicated:—

Peabody, June 29; Concord, July 6; Plymouth, July 20; Marblehead, August 3; Woburn, August 17; Newburyport, August 31; Bedford, September 7. Lexington was visited June 15, when the many objects of interest were seen and places visited, under the guidance of Rev. Charles A. Staples of the Lexington Society.

For the coming fall and winter, the regular semi-monthly meetings will be held, when essays or talks will be given by representative men and women interested in historical matters, and will be fully up to the high standard of previous seasons. Among others, the following have been secured: Mrs. M. D. Frazar, George B. Clark, Sara A. Stone, Levi L. Hawes, all of Somerville, and Ellen M. Wright, of Medford.

Historic Spots.

The marking of the many historical places in Somerville is one of the things to which the Historical Society is giving its attention. Last year, on its petition to the city, the outline of the famous French Redoubt on Central hill was designated by granite monuments set in the ground; a tablet showing the form of the work, etc., was placed alongside of the one descriptive of the present battery, but by some oversight the fact that the marking was done on petition of our society does not appear on the tablet.

This year the society has again petitioned for the permanent marking of quite a number of other interesting places. This petition was quickly referred to a committee, and the proper order passed to carry out the suggestion. The list of places is as follows:—

On Masonic block, Union square: "Site of recruiting stand for Union soldiers in Civil war."

On Asylum hill (Cobble hill): "Site of 'Putnam's impregnable fortress,' 1775."

On Convent hill (Ploughed hill): "Fortified and bombarded in 1775-'76. Site of Ursuline convent, founded 1820, and opened 1826; burned 1834. Hill dug down 1875 to 1897."

On south side Mystic avenue (nearly opposite coal wharf): "Old fort. Extreme left of American army 1775-76. Commanded Mystic river."

In Broadway park: "Route of Middlesex canal. Chartered 1793; opened 1803."

At Somerville and Charlestown line on Washington street: "Paul Revere, on his famous ride, April 18, 1775, was intercepted here by British officers, and escaped."

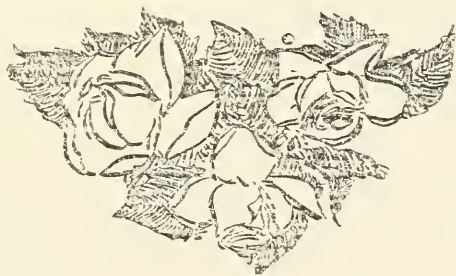
Old cellar hole east of Middlesex avenue, near old wharf and Wellington bridge: "Site of Governor John Winthrop's house, 1631."

On Ten Hills farm: "Site of the mansion of Robert Temple, afterward Colonel Jaques."

On old wharf, east of Middlesex avenue, near new bridge, south shore Mystic river: "Ancient wharf. Here Governor Winthrop launched the 'Blessing of the Bay,' the first ship built in Massachusetts, July 4, 1631. The British landed here in their raid on the Powder house September 1, 1774."

On Prospect hill: "Site of old wind mill."

Perhaps the most important of these is the spot where the "Blessing of the Bay" was launched—the first craft built in the country. This little vessel, the pioneer of all those merchantmen built along the Mystic in after years, becoming later an armed cruiser, protecting the infant coasting trade and fishing craft in the waters of New England, the progenitor, in fact, of our modern navy, the spot where it was launched might well be called the "Birthplace of the United States Navy." Surely it deserves special recognition at the hands of a patriotic and prosperous community.



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